

4.2.4.6 Biological Resources

No Action Alternative

Under No Action, the Pu storage mission described in Section 2.2.4 would continue at Pantex. This activity would result in no appreciable change to current conditions of biological resources at Pantex as described in Section 3.5.6.

Upgrade Alternative

Preferred Alternative: Upgrade With Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site Plutonium Pits Subalternative

Modify Existing Zone 12 South Facilities for Continued Plutonium Storage

Upgrading the existing Pu storage facility at Pantex would cause minimal disturbance to biological resources. This is the case since all activities would take place within an area that is currently disturbed by site structures. Noise associated with construction could cause some temporary disturbance to wildlife, but this impact would be minimal since animals living adjacent to the developed area have already adapted to its presence. Impacts to wetlands and aquatic resources would not occur since these resources are not found in the upgrade area. Since the upgrade would take place within a developed area, impacts to threatened and endangered species would not be expected.

Upgrade Without Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site Plutonium or Los Alamos National Laboratory Plutonium Subalternative

Modify Existing Zone 12 South Facilities for Continued Plutonium Storage

The Upgrade Without RFETS Pu or LANL Pu Subalternative is similar to the Upgrade With RFETS Pu Pits Subalternative because the modified facilities in Zone 12 South would be designed with adequate capacity to store all of the RFETS Pu pits. No additional resources would be required and therefore the impacts would be the same.

Upgrade With All or Some Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site Plutonium and Los Alamos National Laboratory Plutonium Subalternative

Modify Existing Zone 12 South Facilities for Continued Plutonium Storage

Upgrading with all or some RFETS and LANL material would not be expected to change impacts to biological resources from those described for the Upgrade With RFETS Pu Pits Subalternative.

Consolidation Alternative

Construct New and Modify Existing Zone 12 South Facilities

Under this alternative, Pu would be consolidated in a modified existing facility at Pantex requiring some new construction. Modification of existing facilities would occur on previously disturbed land and, therefore, would cause minimal disturbance to biological resources. Noise associated with construction could cause some temporary disturbance to wildlife, but this impact would be minimal since animals living adjacent to the developed area have already adapted to its presence. Construction-related ground disturbance may increase the potential for sediment runoff effects to playa wetlands and aquatic habitat. This impact would be controlled through the implementation of standard soil erosion and sediment control measures. Since this alternative

occurs within a developed area, impacts to threatened and endangered species would not be expected. Consultation with USFWS and State agencies would be conducted at the site-specific level, as appropriate. [Text deleted.]

[Text deleted.]

Construct New Plutonium Storage Facility

Impacts to biological resources from a new storage facility would be nearly the same as those described for the construction of a new facility and the modification of an existing facility alternatives addressed above. This is the case since both options would be located in the same general area of the Pantex site and both would occur on previously disturbed land. [Text deleted.]

Collocation Alternative

Construct New Plutonium and Highly Enriched Uranium Storage Facilities

Under this alternative, Pu material would be stored with HEU inventories in a new collocated storage facility at Pantex. Construction and operation of collocated storage facilities would occur on previously disturbed land and therefore would cause minimal disturbance to biological resources similar to, but somewhat greater than those described for the consolidated storage facility alone. [Text deleted.]

Subalternative Not Including Strategic Reserve and Weapons Research and Development Materials

The exclusion of strategic reserve and weapons R&D materials would have almost the same effects to the No Action Alternative, the Upgrade Alternative, the Consolidation Alternative, and the Collocation Alternative. The size of the facility would be similar and would not result in the reduction of disturbed habitat and/or fewer facility modifications and the potential impacts to biological resources would be similar. [Text deleted.]

Phaseout

During phaseout of Pu storage facilities at Pantex, short-term increased human activity could disturb some wildlife species on the site. Following phaseout activities, the wildlife populations would be expected to return to pre-phaseout size and location. The only effect to wetlands and aquatic resources would be a slight reduction of wastewater discharge to playas.